

# **BUSINESS MAIL 101**

## **Basics of Discounted Mail**

**Welcome to Business Mail 101.** Welcome to Business Mail 101, a tool for beginning or infrequent mailers that will help you harness the power of mail for your business or organization.

## Agenda

- Discounted mail prices and classes of mail
- How to qualify for discounted mail prices
- Resources to help you prepare your mail
- How to design a mailpiece
- How to obtain an address list
- Choosing the best postage payment method

### **In this session, we will cover:**

Discounts available

How to qualify for discount mail prices

Resources to help you prepare your mail

How to design a mailpiece

How to obtain an address list

And, choosing the best postage payment method for you

## First-Class Mail®

- Maximum of 13 ounces
- Bill or credit card
- Handwritten letter (max. 3.5 oz.)
- Invoice or statement of account
- Personal correspondence
- Presorted and automation rates available
- Estimated delivery 1-3 days

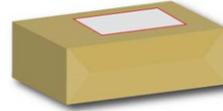


First-Class service (including Express Mail® or Priority Mail®) is required for personal correspondence, handwritten or typewritten letters, and bills, credit cards, invoiced or account statements.

It may be used for any mailable items, including advertisements and light weight merchandise.

## Standard Mail™

- Advertisement
- Catalogs or newsletters
- Circulars or flyers
- Small parcels
- Nonprofit rates available
- Presorted and automation rates available
- Estimated delivery 3 to 10 days
- Less than 16 ounces



Standard Mail encompasses many types of mail: advertisements, catalogs, circulars, and newsletters. Nonprofit, pre-sorted and automation rates are available on standard mail, and the estimated delivery for this class of mail is 3 to 10 days.

Standard Mail also offers a lower price on postage in exchange for the work you perform. The work you perform consists of preparing, sorting, and entering your mail can lower your postage costs. Each mailpiece must weigh less than 16 ounces.

Standard Mail requires a minimum of 200 pieces or 50 pounds per mailing. It can not be used for sending personal correspondence, handwritten or typewritten letters, or bills and account statements. Prices are based on weight, shape, preparation, and entry. Automation prices are lower than nonautomation prices.

Standard mailers who live near a large mail processing plant may be able to take advantage of destination entry discounts simply by driving a short distance to enter their mail. You may want to consider holding your permit at one of these facilities. Your local BMEU or Post Office can help you understand your options.



## What is Commercial Mail?

- Larger quantities of mail prepared for mailing at reduced commercial prices of postage
- Primarily consists of First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail™ but is available for other classes of mail

\*Note: US Postal Service® uses "Discounted" and "Presorted" interchangeably.

## What is Discounted Mail? Is it Right for You?

The term "Commercial Mail" refers to larger quantities of mail prepared for mailing at reduced commercial postage rates.

In Business Mail 101, the term "Discounted Mail" means First-Class Mail® and Advertising Mail (called "Standard Mail™ ") that meets volume minimums and is sorted by ZIP Code™ by the mailer. Discounted prices are available for other classes of mail, too. The Postal Service uses the terms "discounted" and "presorted" interchangeably.



## Is Discounted Mail Right For You?

### Discounted (Commercial) mail prices

- Less than retail single piece prices
- Offered to mailers who presort their mail
- Or perform work normally done by U.S. Postal Service®

This is called "worksharing"  
Bottom line – YOU SAVE MONEY!

**Discounted or Presort prices are discounted from "single-piece" price.** "Single-piece" means that you pay the full postage price; when you put a 49-cent stamp on a letter, you're paying the single-piece price. Many mailers pay single-piece prices even though they are producing large mailings. Why? They don't want to perform extra mail preparation, they don't have the time, it's just not cost effective for their business or they simply are unaware of Business (Commercial) mail.

Business Mail 101 will help you make smart choices about your own mail to determine if discount prices are right for you.

The Postal Service offers discounts for bulk mailings because you perform some of the work that otherwise would have to be done by the Postal Service (for example, sorting the mail by ZIP Code™ or transporting the mail to a different postal facility). Everyone benefits from this "worksharing." Mailers make an investment in time and technology and save on postage costs and Postal Service costs are reduced.

Bottom line – YOU SAVE MONEY!

- “Discounted Mail” prices are significantly lower than single-piece
- Can accommodate a variety of business needs
- The more you send the more you save

The key things to remember about discounted mail are:

- “Discounted Mail” prices are significantly lower than single-piece
- Can accommodate a variety of business needs \_\_\_
- The more you send the more you save!

- Obtain mailing permit
- Pay annual mailing fee
- Pay postage with precanceled stamps, meter, or permit imprint
- Consider size, shape, and weight
- Ensure accurate addresses
- Presort mailpieces (sort by ZIP Code™)
- Mail at Post Office where you hold permit

**In order to mail at Discounted or Presorted prices, you need to:**

- Obtain a [mailing permit \(permission to mail\)](#) and pay an [annual mailing fee](#).
- Pay postage using one of three (3) convenient methods: [precanceled stamps](#), [postage meter](#), or [permit imprint](#).
- Make smart choices about the [size, shape, and weight](#) of your mailpiece.
- Ensure that your [addresses are accurate](#).
- Presort the mailpieces (separate or sort your mail by ZIP Code™).
- Take your mail to the Post Office where you hold your mailing permit.

The choices you make can result in significant postage

savings.

## Mailing Permit

- Authorization to use a certain postage payment method for commercial mailings
- No application fee to mail with precanceled stamps or meter
- **\$225** One time **application fee** for permit imprint
- **\$225 annual presort mailing fee**

\*\* Fees Subject to change

## Mailing Permit

A mailing permit is permission to use a certain postage payment method for commercial mailings.

There is no fee to apply for a permit to mail with pre-canceled stamps or a postage meter.

There is a one time \$225 application fee to mail with a permit imprint. This one-time fee pays for setting up your permit imprint account.

**You must hold a permit and pay an annual mailing fee at every Post Office where you want to deposit and pay for your mail.**

## Mailing Permit

- Remember, a permit is “permission to mail” at discounted prices
- Inactive accounts are based on the last mailing or last fee payment in a 24 month period
- Each Permit Imprint mailing must have a min. of 50 lbs. or 200 pieces

## TIPS

--Remember, a permit is “permission to mail,” at discounted prices regardless of how you pay for postage. A “permit imprint” is a way of paying postage. Many mailers get a “permit” to mail with “permit imprint.”

If no mailings are made or no annual fee paid during a 2-year or 24 month period, your account is inactive. You’ll then have to re-apply and pay the application fee again.

Inactive accounts are now based on the last mailing or last fee payment in a 24 month period.



## Minimum Quantities for a Discounted Mailing

- 500 pieces for First-Class Mail®
- 200 pieces (or 50 pounds of mail) for Standard Mail™
- 300 pieces for Presorted or Carrier Route Bound Printed Matter
- 300 pieces for Presorted Library Mail
- 300 pieces for Presorted Media Mail

### Minimum Quantities for Discount Mailing

To qualify for certain postage discounts, you must mail a minimum number of pieces:

- 500 pieces for First-Class Mail®
- 200 pieces (or 50 pounds of mail) for [Standard Mail™](#)
- 300 pieces for [Presorted or Carrier Route Bound Printed Matter](#)
- 300 pieces for [Presorted Library Mail](#), 300 pieces for [Presorted Media Mail](#)

- \$225 paid via cash or check at the Post Office
- Centralized Account Payment System (CAPS)-electronic transfer of funds
- No special form to fill out
- Provides permission to mail a certain class of mail from a certain postal facility for 365 days

## Annual Mailing Fee

Regardless of the method of postage payment you chose, if you mail in bulk you must pay an annual mailing fee (sometimes called a “presort mailing fee”). This fee is separate from any other application fees or account deposits. The annual mailing fee is currently \$225.

You can pay via cash or check at the Post Office.

Paying the annual mailing fee gives you permission to mail a certain class of mail from a certain postal facility for 365 days. For instance, you must pay two (2) annual fees if you choose to mail at both Presorted First-Class Mail and Standard Mail bulk prices.

You cannot mail in bulk until you pay your annual mailing fee.

Electronic transfer of funds is available by setting up a **Centralized Account Payment System (CAPS) account**.

- Must pay an annual mailing fee at every post office where you intend to mail
- Pay when you bring in first mailing
- Fee good for 365 days

## Mailing From More Than One Place

You must hold a [mailing permit](#) and pay an annual mailing fee at every Post Office where you want to enter and pay for your mail.

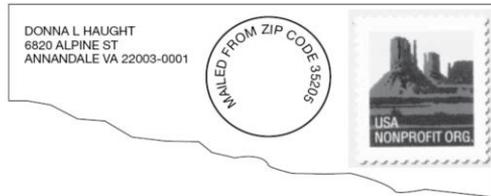
### TIP

*-You don't have to pay your annual mailing fee until you bring in your first mailing. The annual mailing fee is good for 365 days from the date it is paid. If you're not doing your first mailing for, say, 5 weeks, wait to pay this fee until you take your first mailing to the Post Office. This buys you five more weeks of mailing on the other end of the 365 days!*



## Precanceled Stamps

- Special stamps available in specific denominations for Presorted First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail™



\*Note: only one (1) pre-canceled stamp may be affixed to each mailpiece.

## Precanceled Stamps

Precanceled stamps are special stamps that are available in specific denominations and are for Presorted First-Class Mail® and Standard Mail™. Mailers apply these special stamps to envelopes at a lower postage rate (say, 10 cents) and pay the difference between the rate paid on each piece and total postage due when they drop off the mail at the Post Office. The acceptance clerk can help you fill out your postage statement to calculate how much postage you still owe. You may pay that difference with a check, a meter strip, or through a postage account.

Note: only one (1) precanceled stamp may be affixed to each mailpiece.



## Precanceled Stamps

### Available in four denominations:

- 25¢ for Presorted First-Class Mail®
- 15¢ for Presorted First-Class Cards
- 10¢ for Regular Standard Mail™
- 5¢ for Nonprofit Standard Mail

Precanceled stamps are available in four denominations:

25¢ for Presorted First-Class Mail® only

15¢ for Presorted First-Class Cards only

10¢ for Regular Standard Mail™ only

5¢ for Nonprofit Standard Mail only



### Postage Meter

- Prints postage directly on mailpiece (or meter tape)
- Meter size varies by need

### Postage Meter

A [postage meter](#) prints postage directly onto your mailpieces (or onto a meter tape, which you apply to your mailpieces). Postage meters are a very convenient way to pay for postage and track postage costs for your business or organization.

Postage meters come in all sizes. Very large mailers have big, specialized meters that fold, stuff, weigh, and meter postage onto envelopes. Some meters are small and require each mailpiece to be hand-fed. That can take time. A [meter manufacturer](#) can help you decide which meter is right for your mailing needs.

If you already have a postage meter and you're starting to do bulk mailings, using your meter is a smart choice. Although you can use the same postage meter for all of your mail, you must apply for a permit to use the meter for bulk mailings. Also, there are special markings required for bulk mailings that can be applied with your meter stamp. That saves you an extra step.



## Authorized Meter Providers

Postage meters are only available from authorized providers. Vendors set service and leasing fees.

[Data-Pac Mailing Systems Corp](#)

[Ascom Hasler](#)

[Neopost](#)

[Pitney Bowes](#)

[FP Mailing Solutions](#)

### **Get a postage meter**

Postage meters are only available from authorized providers. Vendors set service and leasing fees.

[Data-Pac Mailing Systems Corp](#)

[Ascom Hasler](#)

[Neopost](#)

[Pitney Bowes](#)

[FP Mailing Solutions](#)

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## Permit Imprint

- Most popular and convenient way to pay postage
- Postage information printed in upper right corner of mailpiece
- Postage block = "indicia"

## Permit Imprint

Permit imprint is the most popular and convenient way to pay for postage, especially for high volume mailings. Instead of using precanceled stamps or a postage meter, the mailer prints postage information in the upper right corner of the mailpiece. This postage block is called an "indicia."



### Permit Imprint

- Set up postage account at Post Office
- Postage deducted from account
- All mailpieces must be same weight

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
NEW YORK, NY  
PERMIT NO. 1

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
AMARILLO TX  
PERMIT NO. 12

PARCEL POST  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 10001  
PERMIT NO. 1

To use permit imprint, you set up a postage account (called an "advance deposit account") at the Post Office where you'll be depositing your mail. When you bring your mailing to the Post Office the total postage is deducted from your account. It's like having a checking account at the Post Office.

The key to permit imprint is identical weight pieces. All of your mailpieces must weigh exactly the same. Why? Because you don't have postage affixed, the Postal Service has to verify the number of pieces in your mailing. We do this by weighing individual pieces and your entire mailing to check the number of pieces and calculate the postage you owe.



### Permit Imprint

- Simple and convenient
- May use rubber stamp to imprint
- No need to buy postage in advance

Permit imprint is simple and convenient — you save time because you're not manually affixing postage to each piece. You print the permit imprint when you print the mailpiece. If you already have a mailpiece printed without the permit imprint, you may use a rubber stamp to manually imprint the permit information.

Permit imprint is convenient because you don't have to buy postage in advance, remember to reset your meter, or worry about putting the right amount of postage on each piece.

## Size and Shape

- The Postal Service separates mail into four shape categories:
  - cards
  - letters
  - large envelopes and "flats"
  - parcels
- Different rates and preparation standards depending on the shape
- Questions directed to Business Mail Entry staff or a Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA)

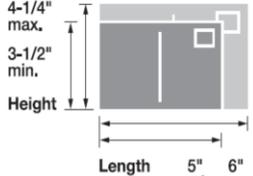
## Size and Shape

The Postal Service separates all mail into four size categories: [cards](#) , [letters](#), [large envelopes and "flats"](#) , and [parcels](#)

There are different rates and different standards for preparing your mail depending on the size of the mailpieces. If you have any questions about the size or shape of your mailpiece, contact your local Mailpiece Design Analyst (MDA) or Business Mail Entry Staff for advice.

## Physical Standards for Cards

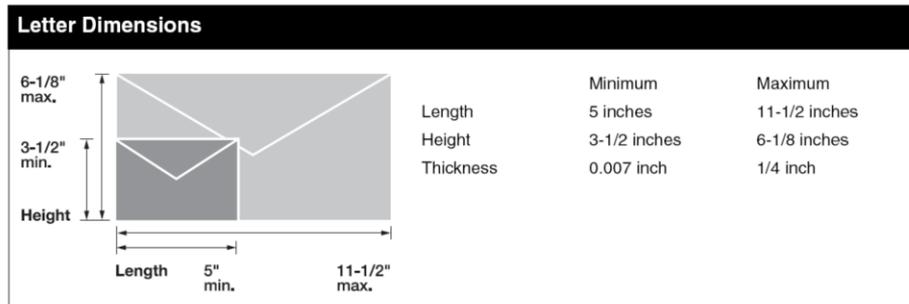
### Card Dimensions



	Minimum	Maximum
Length	5 inches	6 inches
Height	3-1/2 inches	4-1/4 inches
Thickness	0.007 inch	0.016 inch

Here are the standards for cards. To be classified as a card the mailpiece must be a minimum of 3/12 inches by 5 inches by .007 and a maximum of 6 inches by 4 ¼ inches by .016 inches.

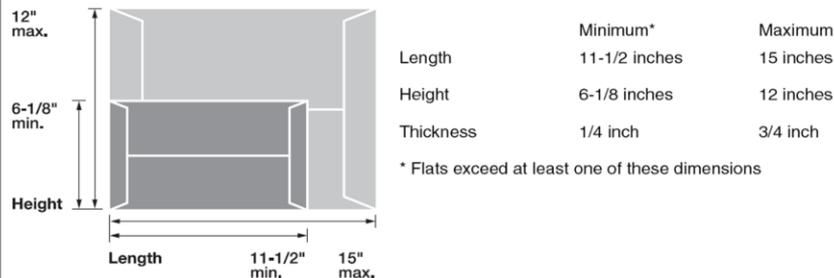
## Physical Standards for Letters



Notes: The minimum dimension for a letter are 3 1/2" in height by 5" in length. The maximum dimension are 6 1/8" in height by 11 1/2" in length. The minimum thickness is .007 inches and the maximum is 1/4 of an inch thick.

## Physical Standards For Flats

### Flat Dimensions



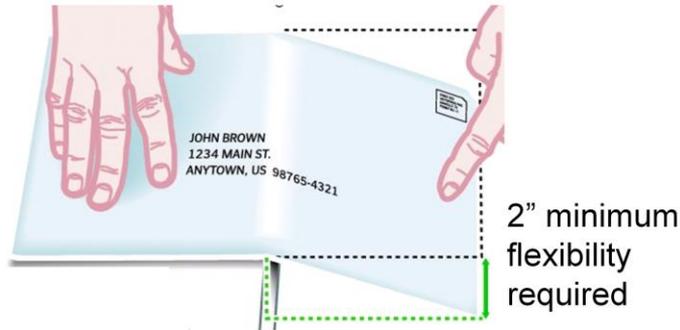
- All flats must be flexible, uniformly thick, and rectangular in shape

If your mailpiece exceeds one of the dimensions of a letter it may be classified as a flat. The minimum size for flats are 11 ½ long by 6 1/8 high by ¼ inches thick. The maximum is 15 inches long by 12 inches high by ¾ inches thick.

All flats must be flexible, uniform in thickness and rectangular in shape.

## Additional Physical Standards For Flats

For flats, length is the longest dimension



Flex Test, Flats 10" or longer that contain a rigid insert perpendicular to surface

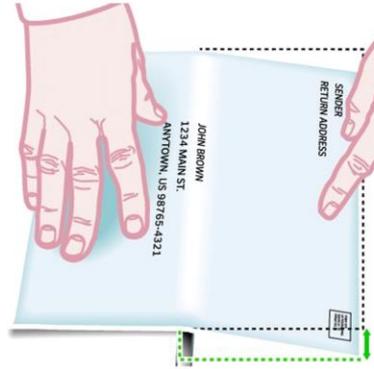
The test shown here can assist you in making the determination if your mailpiece is classified as a flat.

For flats, length is the longest dimension; 2" minimum flexibility required; Flex Test, Flats 10" or longer that contain a rigid insert perpendicular to surface

### Uniform Thickness:

Flat-size mailpieces must be uniformly thick so that any bumps, protrusions, or other irregularities do not cause more than 1/4-inch variance in thickness.

## Physical Standards For Flats



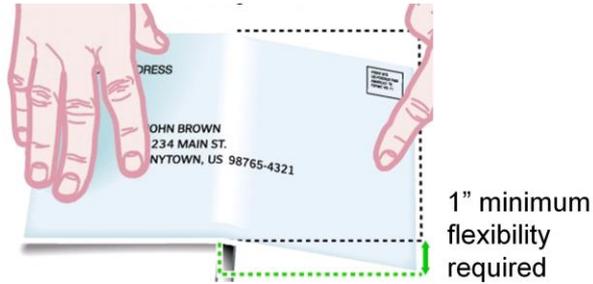
For flats,  
length is  
the longest  
dimension

1" minimum  
flexibility  
required

Flex Test, Length runs parallel to surface

## Physical Standards For Flats

For flats, length is the longest dimension



Flex Test, Flats less than 10" that contain a rigid insert; perpendicular to surface

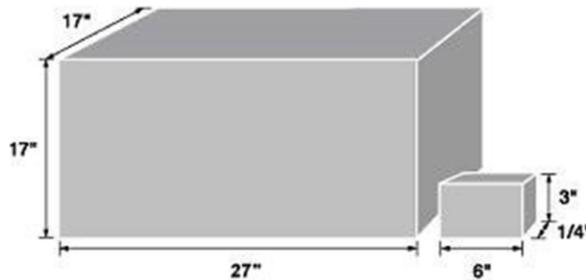
## Standards for Automation Flats

	Minimum /Maximum Thickness	Minimum / Maximum Weight
First Class	<b>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</b>	<b>13 Ounces</b>
Standard	<b>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</b>	<b>Up to 16 Ounces</b>
Periodicals, Bound Printed Matter	<b>1/4 inch/ 3/4 inch</b>	<b>20 Ounces</b>

Automation flats have additional standards. (Read Slide)

If your mail piece does not meet the standards for flats it will be classified as a parcel.

## Physical Standards for Machinable Parcels



**Machinable Parcels:** Minimum weight: 6 ounces (3.5 ounces for small lightweight parcels)

**Maximum weight:** 25 pounds (35 pounds for Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service, except books and other printed matter which cannot exceed 25 lbs.)

There are three types of parcel categories. These are machinable, irregular, and outside.

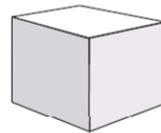
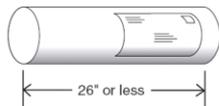
Let's review the standards for Machinable Parcels first:

**Minimum weight:** No less than 6 ounces (3.5 ounces for small lightweight parcels)

**Maximum weight:** No more than 25 pounds (35 pounds for Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service, except books and other printed matter which cannot exceed 25 pounds).

## Physical Standards For Irregular Parcels

- Rolls & tubes
- Unwrapped, paper-wrapped, or sleeve-wrapped
- Articles enclosed in envelopes



Irregular parcels include parcels that do not meet the dimensional criteria of machinable parcels and other parcels that cannot be processed by parcel sorters, including:

- Rolls and tubes up to 26 inches long and merchandise samples not individually addressed
- Unwrapped, paper-wrapped, or sleeve-wrapped articles that are not letter-size or flat-size (e.g., catalogs, directories).
- Articles enclosed in envelopes that are not letter-size, flat-size, or machinable parcels

## Physical Standards: Outside Parcels

Exceeds any of the maximum dimensions for machinable parcels:

- cartons containing more than 24 oz. of liquids in one or more glass containers
- cartons containing 1 gallon or more of liquid in metal or plastic containers



Metal-strapped boxes



More than 26"



Liquid containers

Outside parcels exceed any of the maximum dimensions for machinable parcels. This category also includes certain high-density items, cartons containing more than 24 ounces of liquids in one or more glass containers, cartons containing 1 gallon or more of liquid in metal or plastic containers

## Categories of Mail

- Machinable
- Nonmachinable
- Automation

Once your mailpiece has been determined to a letter, flat, or parcel it must also be categorized as machinable, nonmachinable, or automation.

A mailpiece is **machinable** if it can be sorted on Postal Service processing equipment and meet specific standards, including size, shape, and weight.

A mailpiece is **nonmachinable** if it cannot be sorted by Postal Service equipment. Higher postage prices may apply to mailpieces that do not meet machinable standards.

Your mailpiece meets automation standards and qualifies for automation prices if it meets the specific addressing, barcoding, and design standards established for your mailing service and your level of sortation.

For assistance with determining machinability or automation compatibility see your local post office, mailing requirements office, or mailpiece design analyst.

## Barcodes

- Series of long and short bars that represent numbers
- Represent ZIP Code™, ZIP+4®, and delivery addresses
- Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMB)

## Barcodes

A barcode is a series of long and short bars that represent a series of numbers. Some barcodes represent ZIP Code™, ZIP+4®, and delivery addresses. The Postal Service uses automated equipment that reads the barcode to process and sort mail. At the Postal Service, the barcode tells us where to deliver your mail. There is the Intelligent Mail® Barcode. Contact your local business mail entry office or Mailpiece Design Analyst for additional information about these barcodes.

There are different kinds of barcodes for other things like Delivery Confirmation™. In addition to IMb on mailpieces, tray and sack labels contain a barcode. All of these barcodes have different functions and must meet certain specifications so that the Postal Service can read them correctly.

A barcode by itself does not qualify a mailpiece for a lower rate. To get lower postage rates, a mailpiece must have certain characteristics (one of which is a barcode)

## Automation Priced Mail

- 100% barcoded and prepared for high-speed mail processing
- Prices available for letters, cards, flats (large envelopes), and parcels

### Automation

Automation priced mail is mail that is 100% barcoded and prepared for the Postal Service's™ high-speed mail processing equipment. The Postal Service saves the cost of more labor-intensive sortation and shares the savings with you in the form of lower postage prices.

Automation rates are available for [letters, cards](#), flats (large envelopes), and [parcels](#).

Your local acceptance staff can provide additional information and can help you decide if automation is right for you. A Mailpiece Design Analyst can help you design a mailpiece that will qualify for automation prices. A presort bureau or letter shop can help you prepare your mail to qualify for these special prices.

## Address Accuracy

- Obtain address list
- Check the addresses for accuracy

### **Address Accuracy**

You've gone through a lot of time and expense to create a mailpiece that is attractive and effective. Now you need to make certain that it gets to your customer. Believe it or not: over 44 million Americans move every year. How many of those people are your customers or members? The Postal Service processes your mail on machines that read address information and translate it into a barcode. When a machine misreads an address, that mailpiece may get missorted or delayed. This section will guide you through some smart choices for getting your mail addressed and delivered right the first time.

There are two steps:

Obtain an address list

Check the addresses to make sure they are correct before applying them to your mailpieces.

## Keys to a successful mailing

- Know your audience
- Get your message delivered
- Use a great mailing list

### Address Lists

The keys to a successful mailing start with:

- Knowing your audience
- Getting your message delivered to your audience.
- If you do not already have an address list for your message, then you need to develop, buy, or rent a mailing list.

## Address Lists

- USPS® does not sell address lists
- USPS has products and services that help mailers check, standardize their addresses, and keep their lists up-to-date

### **Address Lists**

The Postal Service does not sell address lists. However, the Postal Service has products and services that help mailers check and standardize their addresses (for instance, whether 123 MAIN is a ST, AVE, or DR) and keep their lists up to date (for example, providing ancillary services to let mailers know if addressees have moved).

## Address Lists

- You can buy or rent a mailing list
  - Yellow Pages under "lists", "mailing lists" or "mailing services"
  - On-line search for list providers in your area

### **Address Lists**

There are companies that collect and sell information about consumers and businesses. You can buy or rent a mailing list from those companies. Look in the yellow pages under "lists" or "mailing lists" or "mailing services" or conduct an on-line search for list providers in your area.

## Why bother checking the accuracy of your address list?

- 17% of Americans move annually
- 44 Million people move yearly
- 1 out of every 6 families move yearly
- Address lists bought/rented must be checked to ensure they are correct

## Checking the Accuracy of Your Address List

Why bother? First, because it's required by the Postal Service to obtain a certain rate. Second, look at these statistics:

17% of Americans move annually.

44 Million people move each year.

1 out of every 6 families move each year.

How many of these people are your customers or members?

Just because you buy or rent a list does not mean that the addresses are correct or "certified." To make certain that you are getting a list with accurate addresses, ask about the National Deliverability Index (NDI) of the list. The NDI rates the percentage of addresses in a list that are deliverable. For example, if you are targeting a specific 5-digit ZIP Code, look for an NDI of 100% for address element.

- For Presorted Standard Mail™ and First-Class Mail® rates, ZIP Codes™ MUST be checked for accuracy within the last 12 months of mailing date
- When you complete and sign a postage statement you certify your mailing qualifies for the rates claimed

## Address Accuracy

The Postal Service offers many ways to check the accuracy of your list. Vendors also offer USPS® -approved products and services for address list maintenance.

For presorted Standard Mail™ and Presorted First-Class Mail® rates, ZIP Codes™ MUST be checked for accuracy within the last 12 months of mailing date. When you complete and sign a postage statement you certify your mailing qualifies for the rates claimed.

## Address Quality Choices

- Use [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) to check the ZIP Codes™
- Process your address list through CASS-certified software
  - CASS improves the accuracy of carrier route, five-digit ZIP®, ZIP + 4®, and delivery point codes that appear on mailpieces
- Address List Correction Service

## Address Accuracy

Here are some of options for checking ZIP Codes and addresses:

Use [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) to check the ZIP Codes in your list. Process your address list through [CASS-certified software](#).

Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) improves the accuracy of carrier route, five-digit ZIP®, ZIP + 4®, and delivery point codes that appear on mailpieces. It is offered to all mailers, service bureaus, and software vendors who want to evaluate their address-matching software and improve the quality of their ZIP + 4, Carrier Route Information System (CRIS), and five-digit coding accuracy.

Address List Correction Service. You can submit a printout of your list to the Postal Service and we will mark any changes. There is a fee for this service. It is available through your Address Management System Office.

## Address Quality Choices

- NCOALink
  - Updates addresses with change-of-address information filed with the Post Office

## Address Quality Choices

**NCOALink.** A licensed vendor will run your mailing list through special software that updates addresses for your customers who have filed a change-of-address with the Post Office.

*The advantage to using NCOALink is that you clean up your list BEFORE you mail. You also know in advance how much it's going to cost you (because a vendor charges by the address). With an ancillary service endorsement you get the same result (a corrected address) AFTER you mail, and you don't know how much you'll pay in fees until AFTER the corrections come back.*

## Address Quality Choices

- Move Update required for all presorted First-Class & Standard mailings
- Within 95 days of the date of mailing
- NCOA Link includes Move Update

## Address Quality Choices

Address Information System (AIS) Viewer. An interactive CD-ROM designed to provide the ability to retrieve, view, and print accurate and current ZIP Code™ information for all 50 states on demand, eliminating hardcopy reports.

**Move Update** is required for all presorted First-Class mailings. A USPS-approved method must be used within 95 days of the date of mailing.

## Prepping Your Mail

- Supplies
- Presorting your letter mail
- Prepare containers (trays/sacks)
- Prepare postage statement
- Drop off your business mail

The next few slides will go into detail the information you need to prep your mail for delivery to your customers. We'll review:

- Supplies needed and where to get them
- How to presort your letter mail
- How to prepare containers in trays or sacks
- How to prepare your postage statement
- Where to drop off your mail

## Supplies

The Postal Service supplies the following items for free:

- Trays
- Tray "sleeves" or lids
- Bundle labels
- Container labels
- Labeling lists – online DMM
- Quick Service Guides -- online
- Postage statement – online

\*Note: Strapping material is required but not provided by USPS

## Pick up Supplies

You'll need supplies to sort and prepare your mail. You can pick up most of these supplies during normal business hours at the acceptance unit — the place at a Post Office where mailers drop off business mail. An acceptance clerk will help you find exactly what you need.

### TIP

*--Most acceptance units have a work area for customers; that's where you'll find the supplies you need. If you need something but don't see it, just ask!*

## Presorting Your Letter Mail

- Grouping by ZIP Code™
- For assistance, contact presort bureau and/or letter shop

### Presorting Your Letter Mail

Many mailers choose to presort their mail because it results in lower postage costs. Basically, "presorting" means grouping your mail by ZIP Code. All of the pieces going to the same destination get grouped into the same bundle or tray. You'll sort to specific areas, and then work your way up to more general areas. All leftover mailpieces are put together.

Some beginning mailers choose not to presort their mail; instead, they pay the full First-Class Mail price, put stamps on their mailpieces, and drop them in a collection box. That's easy! Other mailers don't want to presort their mail but still want to get the lower postage rates. To do that, they use a [presort bureau or letter shop](#) to prepare their mail.

Mailers are no longer required to presort their Standard Mail (Machinable or Automation) and not pay the full First-Class price

(Retail prices). They can claim the MXD price which is still cheaper than the retail price.

## Containers of Letter Mail

- Trays must be sleeved and strapped
- Affix correct label to each tray
- Secure each tray with a single strap around it's length

### Prepare the Containers of Mail

Once all of the mail has been put into the correct tray, the trays must be sleeved and strapped:

Check that each tray has the correct label on it.

Slide the correct-sized sleeve (a paperboard "jacket" that fits over the four sides of a letter tray) over each letter tray. Each tray has a matching sleeve (i.e., a 1-foot sleeve for a 1-foot tray). The sleeve slips over the entire tray, leaving the ends of the tray exposed.

Secure each tray with a single strap around the length of the sleeved tray.

After all of your containers are prepared, then you're ready to complete a postage statement.

## Postage Statement

- Documents the number of pieces in your mailing and the postage you're paying
- Includes spaces for your company name and permit number
- All unshaded sections must be completed by mailer

### Complete a Postage Statement

Once your mail is packaged and all of the trays are sleeved and strapped, you're ready to fill out a postage statement. A postage statement is a special form produced by the Postal Service that documents the number of pieces in your mailing and the postage price that you're paying for those pieces. It also includes spaces for your company name and permit number.

All unshaded sections of the postage statement must be completed by the mailer. These sections include but are not limited to sections entitled:

- Mailer
- Mailing
- Postage
- Certification

## ▪Parts Completed

### Where to Drop Your Business Mail

- You must take your mailing to the office where you hold your mailing permit.
  
- Local Post Office  
<https://tools.usps.com/go/POLocatorAction.action>
  
- Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)  
Locate a BMEU  
<https://ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm>

\*Note: You **MUST NOT** give presorted or permit imprint mail to a letter carrier or deposit in a collection box

All commercial mail must be brought into the [business mail entry unit \(BMEU\)](#). This includes all commercial letter, cards, flats and parcels.

(Locate a BMEU <https://ribbs.usps.gov/locators/find-bme.cfm> This includes all presorted First-Class Mail, all Standard Mail, bulk quantities of Package Services, and any mail paid with permit imprint.

**YOU MUST NOT GIVE PRESORTED OR PERMIT IMPRINT MAIL TO A LETTER CARRIER OR DEPOSIT IT IN A COLLECTION BOX!**

You must take your mailing to the office where you hold your [mailing permit](#). For most mailers, this will be your local business mail entry unit, but if you're in a small town you may have to take your mail directly to the retail window. If you are taking advantage of [destination entry discounts](#), first you must go to the office where you hold your mailing permit. That office will verify and accept your

mailing, and then you can take your destination entry mail to the correct postal facility. You must also complete PS Form 8125 (Plant Verified Drop Shipment (PVDS) Verification and Clearance).

## What to Take to the Post Office

- Signed and dated postage statement(s)
- Supporting documentation
- Check or cash to cover additional postage
- A check for your annual mailing fee

\*Note: A meter strip may be affixed to postage statement to pay for the additional postage

## What to Take to the Post Office

Here's a short list of what to take with you when you're ready to drop off your mail: All of your mail (count your containers!). Signed and dated postage statement(s). Supporting documentation (your tally sheet or printout from presort software). A check or cash to cover any additional postage due (if you've put [precanceled stamps](#) or [meter postage](#) on your mail). **Remember, BMEUs cannot accept cash.** In lieu of a check, you can affix a meter strip to your postage statement to pay for the additional postage if postage is affixed using a postage meter or precancelled stamps. A check for your [annual mailing fee](#) (if you haven't already paid it).

### TIPS

*--If you want a copy of your postage statement for your records, then you'll need to bring two copies with you -- one*

*to turn in with your mail, and one to keep.*

## What Happens at the Post Office

- Eligibility of contents
- Markings and endorsements
- Sortation
- Postage payment

**The Acceptance employees may check to make sure you have prepared your mail properly. This would consist of opening at least one of your trays. We only check the mail now according to Performance Based Verification (PBV).**

\*\*Eligibility of contents (for Standard Mail, the clerk will actually open one of your mailpieces to check that the contents qualify for the rate you're claiming).  
Markings and endorsements. Sortation. Postage payment.

If you're paying with permit imprint, the clerk will check to see that there's enough money in your advance deposit account to cover the cost of your mailing.

In some instances, there may be problems with your mail. Don't be surprised if the first time you bring a mailing in it needs a little fine-tuning. If your mail is not presorted correctly, the clerk will point the problems out to you and tell you how to fix the sortation.

If there are problems with the [characteristics of your mailpiece](#), you might have to pay additional fees or surcharges. In some very rare cases, the contents of your mailing may not be eligible for the rates you're claiming, and you may have

to pay a higher rate of postage.

- Decide on a class of mail
- Create your mailpiece
- Obtain an address list
- Check the accuracy of your address list
- Address your mail
- Choose a postage payment method
- Obtain a mailing permit
- Pay an annual mailing fee
- Pick up supplies
- Sort your mail

Think you're finished? Print out this checklist and use it to ensure you've completed every step.

- Mailpiece Design Analysts (MDAs)  
[http://pe.usps.com/mpdesign/mpdfr\\_mda\\_lookup.asp](http://pe.usps.com/mpdesign/mpdfr_mda_lookup.asp)
- Quick Service Guides (QSG)
- Postal Explorer
- MailPro

## For help designing a mailpiece

[Mailpiece Design Analysts \(MDAs\)](#) are postal employees specially trained to answer your questions regarding mailpiece design. These employees provide advice and issue rulings regarding acceptability for automated rates. MDAs provide technical assistance on mailpiece design to envelope manufacturers, printers, advertising agencies, and graphic designers.

The [Postal Explorer](#) website is a complete collection of mailing standards and Postal Service publications.

The [MailPro](#) is a free monthly newsletter that keeps you up-to-date on recent changes in mailing requirements.

- Mailing Requirements Office
- Business Mail Entry Manager
- Mailing Standards Specialist
- Supervisor, Business Mail Entry
- Business Mail Technicians (BMT)

Customize to your District...

- [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)
- Domestic Mail Manual(DMM) Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service®
- DMM located at <http://pe.usps.com>

From [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), click on Business. Then Mailing Services, then Business Mail 101.

DMM located from [pe.com](http://pe.usps.com).



Questions?

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Thank You.